

JEAN-PAUL RIOPELLE

(Montréal 1923 - 2002 L'Isle-aux-Grues)

Noyauttage. 1957.

Oil on canvas.

Twice signed (one incised) and dated lower right: riopelle 57.

50 × 64 cm.

Provenance: - Jacques Dubourg, Paris (verso with the soiled label). - Galerie Salis, Salzburg. - Purchased from the above in 1992 at Art Basel, since then private collection Switzerland. - By descent to the present owner, since then private collection Switzerland. Exhibitions: - Cologne 1958, Kölnischer Kunstverein. Jean Paul Riopelle. Arbeiten von 1947 - 1957. Gemälde, Gouachen und Aquarelle, 10 January - 3 February, no. 36 (verso with the label). - Wuppertal 1958, Städtisches

Museum. Jean Paul Riopelle. Gemälde, Gouachen, Aquarell. Französische Aquarelle, 16 February - 16 March, no. 34 (verso with the label). - Hannover 1958, Kestner Gesellschaft. Jean Paul Riopelle, 13 September - 19 October, no. 50 (verso with the label). "My father, Jean Paul Riopelle, used to refer to his paintings as "sculptures in oil," a statement that suggests the importance he accorded to the material, plastic elements of his art. He was, of course, a sculptor as well as a painter, working first in clay, then moving on to wax, sandstone, porcelain, even bread crumbs. In all his work, and in all of the many media he explored, he cared deeply about the materials of art, which for him were a constant preoccupation and challenge. He loved first and foremost the direct and spontaneous contact with the elements, digging in with hands full, without sophisticated tools, except perhaps for the custom-made palette knives that he often used in working with paint." (Yseult Riopelle, the artist’s daughter) The painter Jean-Paul Riopelle is one of the first Canadian artists to achieve international fame and recognition. Today, he is one of the most important exponents of Informel and Abstract Expressionism. Born in Montreal, Canada in 1923, he studied at the École des Beaux Arts and the École de Meuble in the 1940s. During his studies he became associated with a group of Canadian painters called Les Automatistes, a group which, alongside the Surrealists, found fault with the establishment, tradition and religious authority, favouring instead the subconscious as the driving force behind non-figurative painting. However, his style, which has its roots in Surrealism and Expressionism, turned to Abstract Expressionism in the 1940s. Our present painting "Noyauttage" from 1957 is an excellent example from the decade of the "Great Mosaics". His painting style is controlled, though always spirited. His choice of colours is determined and strong. He adds the impasto oils to the canvas with palette knife and knife, and in some places allows painted or dripped colours to appear in new, structural, mosaic-like arrangements. The juxtaposition of the palette knife strokes seems almost unsystematic and arbitrary. There is no real pictorial composition and no clearly recognisable centre of the picture. Thus, there is neither a beginning nor an end, and the colour structure pushes beyond the edge of the picture. His works

become colour landscapes whose small-scale, structured dynamism is suggestive of autumnal foliage on the forest floor, or landscapes of fields seen from an aeroplane. Riopelle enjoyed widespread international fame during his lifetime; he participated in three Venice Biennales and the São Paulo Biennale. The Kölnischer Kunstverein, the National Gallery in Canada, the Musée du Québec and the Galerie Maeght in Paris all organised major retrospectives of his work from the 1950s onwards. Later, many more retrospectives were dedicated to him, and today his works are in many public collections.

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